2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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to this result is reprehensible in a husband. We are not certain whether the wife leaves her husband during every pregnancy or only for the first, but there is no doubt that abstinence should always be maintained during the later months of pregnancy and during lactation. At the time of birth the husband will make enquiries about his wife, but he must avoid the house of his parents-in-law.

An experienced woman assists the mother at birth; she cuts the umbilical cord with a sliver of millet stalk and buries the afterbirth [1] outside the hut on the right of the doorway. The place where the afterbirth is buried is not marked in any way, lest an evilly-disposed person might dig it up and burn it. The exact result of such an action was not discovered, but if menstrual blood were burned the woman from whom it had flowed would become sterile. Before the mid-wife allows the young mother to nurse her first child she has to make confession of all her previous love affairs, lest she and the child should die. The husband, who is told the names of his wife's previous lovers, as a rule makes no complaint, for the confession refers to the time before marriage.

The infant must be exhibited to the father and other men, who will gather outside the hut to ascertain that it is not a monorchid (p. 99) or deformed; in either event it would be thrown into the river, with, according to Hofmayr, a sheep as offering.[2] Except on this occasion the child is not taken out of the house during the first month of its life, and not often during the second month. At the birth of every child a goat is killed and the skin rubbed smooth to form a mat for the infant.

Names are given soon after birth and often refer to some incident that occurred in the family. If the father were to dream of an ancestor the child would be named after him, but this occurrence seemed comparatively rare. The birth name is retained throughout life, but Westermann states that a man often acquires a second name later, usually that of a cow or an ox.[3] According to Hofmayr, names play an important role in the life of a Shilluk, just as they do among the Dinka. A girl keeps her name for life, but a boy is continually adding names; they play the part of "decorations", he may take

[1] Hofmayr states that the mother ties the cord round her body (op. cit., 273); we suppose this to refer to the dry stump that later drops from the child's body.
[2] Op. cit., 276.
[3] Op. cit., xxxvi. This obviously refers to the animal given to a lad by his father at manhood.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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one at his first dance, and later on any occasion that he may wish to celebrate. Names are commemorated in poetry.[1]

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Twins are welcomed and spoken of as *nuole juok*, literally "children of God"; the first is called Angar, the second Tian. The next child born after twins is called Ñabol.

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Children are brought up in the house of their father. There is no segregation of the sexes, brother and sister grow up together and may play together, and a boy may beat his sisters if he considers them unruly. The chosen companions of boys appear to be their *uwa* (brothers and ortho-cousins) and of girls their *nyiwa* (sisters and ortho-cousins). Cousins, the children of two brothers or two sisters, may play together in the same way as brothers and sisters, but as a hamlet constitutes the habitation of a group with male descent the children of the brothers are likely to see most of each other when young. If married brothers and sisters happen to live near one another their children—who would be *una*, *nyina*, *uwaja*, and *nywaja* to each other—will have opportunities of meeting, and it seemed that there was no restriction on those of opposite sexes playing together. As women go to live in the *gol* of their husbands, the children of two sisters are unlikely to see much of each other, so that the *uma nyima* relationship is unlikely to be an intimate one.

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There is a certain definite relationship between children and their mother's brother (*na*). It is the mother's brother who usually gives a boy his first spear; he also has a right to some of the cattle given as bride-wealth for his sister's daughter, and might perhaps influence her in her choice of a husband. A girl, considered particularly good-looking, married a Dinka, and it was said that her father and *na* persuaded her to reject her Shilluk suitors and accept the Dinka because he could give many more cattle than the Shilluk. Though the *na* always takes a portion of his sister's daughter's bride-wealth, inheritance being from the father to the son he leaves nothing to his sister's children; his own sons, however, inherit his lien on the bride-wealth of the *nyaka*, i.e. of their own *nywaja* (father's sister's daughter). If a man is well off he may give his sister's son some cattle when he wants to get married, but this is a gift, not an obligation. At a funeral the principal duties fall on the son, but at the final sacrifice the sister's son must sacrifice a sheep or a bull, according to his means.

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The *waja* (father's sister) always contributes two head of cattle

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[1] Hofmayr, op. cit., 277.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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victim into a crocodile to be a spouse to one of her crocodile relatives. Yet Nikaiya brings luck to those whom she visits by night to ask for fire; if a barren woman bears a child after such a visit it will be called Nikaiya, and the father will kill a sheep and throw it into the river. Nikaiya is known by her short stout figure and great muscular development, and by the fact that she "eats" (mouths) her words. That the river is the true home of Nikaiya is shown by the manner of sacrificing to her; for as a sacrifice would be made at the shrine of Nyakang, or at the grave shrine of any Shilluk king, if Nyakang or one of the kings had appeared in a dream—or if a king had "possessed" a man causing him to become ill—so when Nikaiya becomes immanent sacrifice is made by throwing a live sheep, with its legs bound, into the river.

Hofmayr states that the *bareth* may divine that a new-born infant has been sent by Nikaiya; if a boy it will then be called Nikaiyo, if a girl Nikaiya.[1] When such a child grows up and becomes betrothed an offering must be made to Nikaiya as part of the wedding ceremony. The couple go to the river, where the *bareth* slaughters a male black and white sheep, smears the young people with the contents of the stomach, and fastens the ear-lobes with beads on to the feet of the bride. Beer, tobacco, earth, and parts of the sacrifice are thrown into the river for Nikaiya, and the betrothed bathe in the river. They are then conducted by the *bareth* to a house prepared for them in the bride's village, and must remain there for three or four days.[2]

There is a limited cult of the Dinka god, Dengdit, perhaps confined to the southern part of the country. Fig. 2 of Pl. IX represents a shrine to Dengdit in Odong hamlet, not far from Fenikang, and we both saw and heard of other instances. The example figured is, as far as we could determine, unlike any Shilluk shrine and was said to be of Dinka pattern. The present incumbent took over the shrine at the death of his grandmother, a Dinka woman, who had been possessed by Dengdit to whom she erected the shrine. The iron bracelets shown in the photograph have all been brought by Shilluk, who visit the shrine in considerable numbers. No doubt the possession of the present incumbent resembles the Shilluk possession by their *ror* (kings).

We should also mention the spirits of the bush and river, i.e. creatures resembling mankind in form but with non-human functions

[1] Op. cit., 277. [2] Hofmayr, op. cit., 291.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

845 **REARING AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN**

On the average number of children in a family vide page XXIII. The birth of twins is regarded as the greatest of good fortune.

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Affection of parents for their children is not wanting. The mother often places the infant in a long basket or bed made of grass; this she carries on her head or covers with a mat in some secure place, while the child sleeps. Education

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is limited to teaching the children the work and skill which the parents command.

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The naming of the children is done by some member of the family, in most cases by the parents or grandparents. The name generally has some connection with circumstances attending the birth. The name *Atgu* ("she died") is often given when the birth occurs in close proximity to a death in the family. *Nawaiŋ* is a very common name; it indicates that the mother of the child has prayed for a child by sweeping a sacred house (a temple of Nyikang or of some other ancient king) with a bunch of straw. Men often acquire a second name when grown up; this one is in most cases called after the name of a cow or an ox.

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When the boys are from thirteen to fifteen years old, they start the cultivation of a small field of their own, for the result of which they try to acquire cattle.

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— The boys and young men of a village born in the same year form a companionship, all member of such a "class" having a common name. The young men of a village do not sleep in their parents' houses, but their common sleeping place is in the cow-shed of the village. The act of sleeping in the barn is called "sleeping in the ashes" from the fact that they during this time sleep in the ashes of the fire kept smouldering in the barn.

567 **SLAVES**

The Shilluks have some slaves secured before the present régime. Some of these are Shilluks, others are from the Kordofan and also from farther up the Nile. They were secured in war or purchased from the Arabs. In single cases Shilluk parents sold their children for food in time of famine, or gave them away to chiefs.

764 **BURIAL**

When a grown-up man dies, he is buried in or just before his hut. An ox is killed as a funeral feast, and its horns are planted on the grave so that they are visible from without. Women and children are buried in the bush. — For a description of a burial vide pages 111 and 135.

Some time after the death of a man a funeral ceremony is held; it takes place when the property of the deceased is divided among his heirs; this may be from about one month to one year after the person has died. The warriors of the neighbouring villages are invited. An ox is killed on the occasion. The ceremony consists in dancing, making displays of arms, feasting on the meat of the slain ox, and drinking merisa. The women also partake in it. Whether any religious actions are connected with it, I do not know.

182 561 621 from the fact that the *jago*, elders of the *dyil* clan, and other lineage representatives, hold political authority quite apart from the age organisation. The age sets take no part in disputes within the settlement, but when the settlement as a whole goes to war the warriors "... are mobilised into age sets."(1) Howell suggests that formerly the age organisation had special military functions, but whether this was so or not, the age sets seem to fulfil a more peaceful purpose today, and form a useful basis for organising the relations of generations for social purposes.

The Ngol Ceremony

561 624 At the *ngol* ceremony a war leader *(ban)* is elected. The *ban* has no administrative or political functions. His duties consist in organising the mobilisation of the warriors and presiding at communal feasts at which people assemble in age sets. His age mates may assist him in his cultivations. After the *ngol* ceremony each age set is given a new name.

Initiation

561 881 There are no elaborate rites of initiation among the Shilluk. Participation in a dance, the *cong bul* marks the initiation of a youth in the age organisation. The *cong bul* is a social affair which is arranged periodically with the permission of the *jago* of the settlement. It is not a ceremony of initiation in the normal sense but merely a formal recognition by the community that a lad has reached adult status and can take part in a man's obligations and privileges. Previous to the *cong bul* a youth is restricted in that he may not fight with spears, take part in war or in any dance other than one held for children. Before the *cong bul* he is not allowed to wear certain kinds of ornaments.

The *cong bul* is attended by a boy when he is 14-16 years old, or earlier if he has to take over the duties of family head through the death of his father. A youth normally obtains his father's permission and another man is appointed to act as his sponsor. The sponsor ceremonially adorns the youth with ornaments before he enters the dance. At the beginning of the dance the warriors salute the *jago*, advance in formation and fling themselves before him.

553 556 At the time of the *cong bul* the initiated is usually presented with two spears by his father. Rich men give their sons an ox and they take their ox-names from these animals. An ox so given is kept until it dies and then a new one of the same colour is substituted. After the *cong bul* the initiates visit relatives and travel round the countryside for a few months.

CLANS AND LINEAGES

614 There are about a hundred patrilineal clans in Shillukland. Each clan has a name which is preceded by the word *kwar*, meaning 'descendants of'. All clansmen trace their descent from a common ancestor. They are bound by distinct rules of behaviour, by special observances and are exogamous.(2)

613 614 The Shilluk clans, like all Nilotic clans, are dispersed, each clan

(1) Howell, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.57. (2) *Ibid.*, p.47.

754 If a man knows that he is being bewitched he can get the witchdoctor to counteract the bad magic and save him. When he gets old the sorcerer may hire out his powers to help people.(1) It is a serious offence to accuse a man of being a sorcerer unless it can be proved, and an accuser [683] may be heavily fined. A sorcerer must be caught in the act if he is to be legitimately killed.

The Daiyat

Daiyat appear to be the feminine equivalents of the *jalyat*. They are not regarded as being so evil and serious in intent as the *jalyat*.

The Evil Eye (Ywop)

The Shilluk believe firmly in the power of the evil eye and that it is inherited, passing from a parent (male or female) to the children. It may also come suddenly upon a person. Those who possess it try to conceal the power from others.(2) Envy, jealousy or anger causes people with this power to bring illness or misfortune on others who are richer and more fortunate than themselves. The *ajuago* can counteract the effects of the evil eye by prayer, sacrifice and countermagic.(3)

LIFE CYCLE

BIRTH

844 About three months before her first child is born, a woman leaves her husband and returns to her parents' *gol* for the birth.(4) Immediately after the birth the mother is exhorted to confess all her previous love affairs to the woman acting as midwife and it is believed that were she not to do so she and the baby would die. The child is shown to the father [847] and his friends who wish to see that it is not a monorchid or deformed in any way. In the former case, the child would probably be killed, for it is believed that monorchids grow up to be sorcerers.(5) Cleansing cere-846 monies are carried out a few days after birth. It is considered wrong to 842 have another child before the previous one has been weaned.

845 Twins are welcomed by the Shilluk. They are called *nuole juok* 'children of god' and have special names. Many ceremonies occur after the birth of twins.

553 Names are given soon after birth and usually refer to some incident which has occurred in the family. The birth name is retained throughout life, although an ox-name and other names are taken later.

DEATH AND FUNERAL CEREMONIES

774 According to Seligman every living man has both a *wei* and a *tipo*. The *wei* is breath or life, the *tipo*, shadow or image. In addition, the

(1) Oyler, *S.N.R.* Vol.II, 1919, No.2, p.123. (2) *Ibid.*
(3) Hofmayr, *Die Schilluk*, 1925, p.221. (4) *Ibid.*, p.271.
(5) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p.70.

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

After a boy has danced for a year or two, he may dance with a married woman who has no children. After another lapse of time he is eligible to dance with the mother of one child, and so on until he is eligible to dance with any woman. A man never dances with his own wife. Often the girl who first dances with a boy is in love with him, and sometimes they later get married. Such marriages are usually happy. If a young man is not asked by a girl to dance with her within two or three years of his initiation, it is not likely that any girl will ask him to dance with her, as the other girls would ridicule her for dancing with an unpopular man. Such a man usually experiences difficulty in getting a wife, as no woman wants to marry a man who is unpopular with the women. The mother of the young man who has been asked to dance prepares a feast for the girl who asked him to dance, and sometimes the girl prepares a return feast for the young man and some of his friends. Many an old man speaks with great respect of the girl who first asked him to dance. When a man is dancing with a woman he calls her (cīgā) " my wife."

If a boy makes unseemly haste to call on the young ladies after his initiation, his father is angry, and says, " Is your reason for dancing to get the right to call on the women ? "

After a boy has danced he takes a second name. He may choose his own name, often from something he has done, or from a cow he has bought. If he cannot think of a suitable name he may ask his friends for suggestions. In some cases an older man may go to him and say, " Do you have a name ? " If he replies in the negative, the man may make a suggestion. The boy does not announce his name to his parents. They may hear his young friends call him by his new name, and they ask, " Is that his name now ? "

If a man dies leaving only a small son who has not danced, they say, " His property is on the ground (jumę̄ ya pi̱ñ). Later when the boy has danced, they say his property has been inherited (alukę̄).

People who are of the same age are called (ti̱i̱ñ ayaj). They are expected to help each other.

The girls may dance when they are very small, but they must wear a sheep-skin. Later, when the girl is larger, and her breasts begin to develop (ti̱ñę̄ atwj) she wears a calf-skin, which is supplied her by her father. If she has no father or close male relative to get her a calf-skin, she will wear the sheep-skin until she is married, and then her husband

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

535 881 leave the dancing ground. Within a few minutes the village is clear of all guests, those who are unable to stand being swept along in the rush.

881 431 Before dancing for the first time the initiate is usually presented with two spears by his father. The sons of rich men are presented with a bull (*Walh Owono*) as well.[8] This bull is treated with great care [563] and affection by the young warrior and he is given a new name by his age-mates—taken from the colour of the bull and they alone may call him so. Theoretically the bull is kept throughout his life, a new [583] one of similar colour and markings being substituted when it dies. It is never given as bride-wealth. The initiates then visit their relatives 881 in the settlement and after a short period of travel return home. In 574 the past these visits were probably on a wider scale and according to Hofmayer "after the dance it is the custom for the Shilluk initiates [114 171] to lead a nomadic life for a time, traversing the country from one end to the other." This statement is probably an exaggeration, but a period of wandering visits is common among African peoples before final reintegration into the community in adult status.

535 764 881 561 At the *Cong Bul*, initiates are introduced to their new privileges together, but the rest of the warriors are not drawn up in age-sets. At the "*Kwogo*" and "*Yok*," which are funeral ceremonies, the male Shilluk are organized according to their respective age-sets. There are few other occasions when the age-set system functions at all.

476 561 Among the Shilluk the more arduous processes of cultivation are carried out communally. A man will invite his neighbours and relatives to help him in his fields and will provide merissa for them afterwards. The helpers are not necessarily his age-mates and it does not appear

[178] 8. The Shilluk say that the custom is dying out and that few fathers have bulls to spare. In any case the youth will take the name of one of his father's bulls. The *Walh Owono* is a source of great pride to its owner and songs are composed about it which are sung for the benefit of girls.

An approximate translation of the song of Ajak, an inhabitant of the Zeraf mouth is as follows:

"I have a grey bull, a great bull,
I am going to Golbaign to buy a bell,
A bell for the bull that lives in
My fathers byre."

28: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

to keep the disease from entering. The mother is warned against looking back.

When a child cries persistently, with no apparent cause, they reach the conclusion that he is being drawn by one of the kings. The servant of the king is called, and given a fee of a sheep. The parents say they want to know, who is drawing the child. The first thing to do is to take cowrie shells, and string beads on them. Each shell has a different coloured bead. The shells are named for their kings, and also for the deceased grandparents of the child. One shell is also put in for the child. The shells are all taken in the hand, and thrown out on a skin. When they fall if another shell touches that belonging to the child, it is being drawn by the spirit of that king or person. The child is then given the name of the person drawing it, and a cure is effected. If at the first attempt no one is indicated the test is repeated until some one is indicated. All the people in the room then cower, and pray to the drawing spirit as the leader directs.

The servants of the king claim the power to converse with the dead. When a spirit is to be called the medium goes into the house with the relatives. She goes to one corner of the room and retires behind a screen. The door is closed to make the room dark. She then takes a gourd with some grain in it and twirls it to make a noise that will call the spirit of the departed. The spirit of the king then takes powerful possession of the medium, and she speaks in a peculiar voice. The usual thing is for the spirit to greet the assembled people, and they reply. The spirit then says: «Where I am it is nice, but I was killed by a certain person (naming him) or I would not have died.» The death was caused by a charm cast on the victim. «I will kill that man, do not quarrel with him. When I finish greeting you I will return.» Sometimes such a message causes the relatives of the deceased to try to kill the one who cast the charm.

An instance of their working is often given in this community. Two men made a trip to the Nuer country. On the return trip one of them, named Shol, was separated from his companion. The other man concluded that he had been killed by a lion, and returned with that report. The people of the village mourned him as dead, but they waited two months. Then a servant of the king was called. She went through the usual forms, and then exclaimed: «Ah the man». The spirit greeted the people, and

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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ordeal'. He brings a sheep to the village where the girl is; a corner of the animal's ear is cut off and the piece put into a bowl of water and the man, the girl and the baby are sprinkled with the resultant blood and water. If by the following morning the child is still alive the man is adjudged to have lied and must pay compensation as above. If, however, the baby should die during the night, then the girl is held to have accused the man falsely.

During the reign of King Kur, whose despotic methods of government resulted in his being removed from office, a much grimmer and more realistic trial by ordeal was enacted. The man and the girl were brought to a channel of the Nile where a large crocodile habitually dwelt. By some means this brute was called up from the depths and the pair placed equidistant from it were made to swim across the channel, or, if they could not swim, were launched on flimsy rafts. The one that the crocodile seized was deemed to be guilty of lying. It is on record that one youth about to be put to the test in this manner protested thus, 'I know that I am innocent all right, but how does the crocodile know that?'

After the proceedings of the naming and the trying of the lovers is concluded, the mother is allowed to have her child. If it should be a boy, the father, who has been informed of the birth and sex of the child though as yet he is not allowed to see him, sends a present of a miniature harpoon, presumably indicative of his desire that his son should grow up to be a mighty hunter of hippopotami. Then a small basket is woven and filled with ashes of burnt cow dung. One of the baby's maternal uncles hangs the basket round his waist calling upon Nyikang to bless the child and to make him a good husbandman. (The basket containing the ashes represents the large family basket filled with grain.) He then walks round the hut where the baby is, beats upon the wall with the basket and then throws it into the road. If the child is a girl the ashes are mixed with water and the uncle makes models of a bull and a cow. Nyikang's blessing is invoked upon the child that at her marriage she may command a good